AN ANALYSIS OF CURRENT AWARENESS SERVICES AND SELECTIVE DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION IN UNIVERSITY OF JOS LIBRARY

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ABSTRACT

This study critically examined the Current Awareness Services (CAS) and Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI) in University of Jos Library (UJL). Adopting the survey research design, the study was set to describe CAS and SDI as factors to improving library usage. The types and limitations of CAS and SDI rendered in University of Jos Library were also given major attention in the study. A population of 100 users and 12 staff constituted the sample for the study. Two sets of questionnaires, made up of 29 items each, were used in collecting data. With the aid of proportional statistics, the received data were presented and analysed. The findings therefore revealed the major CAS and SDI services in the UJL in the following proportion; Pasting of list of new arrivals: 20.62%, library display of books: 23.71%, library display of journals and pictures: 22.68%, sensitization or library orientation: 19.59% and General Studies (GST): 25.77%. Based on the above findings, the researcher recommended that there should be improved funding, provision of adequate listing infrastructure, application of modern ICT facilities/solutions to CAS and SDI services, optimal training of subject librarians and users, employment of qualified subject librarians, improved user-staff relationship and an introduction of compulsory user education.

Keywords: Library Services, Subject Librarian, current awareness services, selective dissemination of information, Academic Library

1. INTRODUCTION

The major function of any academic library is to support their parent organisational objective which is to provide information resources and services to library users. These services include acquisition, registering, cataloguing, and dissemination of information resources. Information in a library cannot be effectively disseminated unless library users are aware of its availability. The view of the library as a store house of outdated resources by users who now depend on the internet and its search engines, is a perspective that should be

abolished, as current libraries have gone beyond the physical walls of a building which is the visual library. Both the current and future needs of library users should always be kept in mind in order to assist them achieve excellence in their academic pursuits. In this light, academic library play a pivotal role as gateways to information resources, center for creation/recreation of academic activities, the fulcrum of academic life, and the engine of learning that fuels the academic institution. There is not only the need to gear up the old ones but also to initiate the new services with the assistance of the latest information technology so that the total library operations and services can be enhanced. (Tanveer, 2013).

According to Oluremi (1998), CAS is a type of service so designed to keep the readers abreast of latest developments in the library. Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI) on the extensive hand, is a concept that is popular among academic libraries which entails creating a database of users' profiles including their teaching and research interest and making available to them unsolicited but relevant library resources geared towards facilitating swift accomplishment of designated goals (Christopher, 2015). In North America, community needs for informal information are often met by the public library's community awareness service (or information and referral service), though practice is far from standardised. This community outreach program is an important feature in many mostly rural societies, which is also a form of creating awareness to library users. (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2017).

Today, CAS alerts scholars, researchers, and health care practitioners to recently published literature in their fields of specialisation (Johnson, Osmond, &Holz, 2009). Librarians who provide these services use various methods to keep current with academic and professional literature. It can be provided in many ways such as: text messages, display, routing of periodicals, list of latest additions, list of latest periodical received, topical bibliographical on demand, contents page service, news clipping service, electronic mail and Bulletin Board Services (BBS) (Tanveer, 2013). Federal University of Technology Owerri (FUTO) in Nigeria, provides its CAS and SDI services through the use of social network by reading blogs, group postings and message boards, also by using tools like "Ask a Librarian", "meebo" and "twitter" to ask questions in real time. (Emezie & Nwaohiri, 2016).

The University of Jos Library is an academic library which has users ranging from undergraduates of varying academic areas/degrees, postgraduates, staff,

and researchers. UJL provides the following CAS and SDI services: publication of list of new arrivals, sensitisation, library display on journals and pictures. These services are of course, not as effective or wide as those of other libraries such as the Harvard Law Library, InstitutoExpresa (IE) Library, Fiji National University Library and Federal University of Technology Owerri (FUTO).

The researcher at this point deemed it necessary to critically examine CAS and SDI in the University of Jos Library, so as to clarify the concepts, measure how effectively these services are rendered and make significant/attainable recommendations based on outcome of analysis.

The core objectives of the study was therefore targeted at answering the following questions;

1. What is the importance of Current Awareness Services and Selective Dissemination of Information services as a factor in improving Library use?
2. What are the types of Current Awareness Services and Selective Dissemination of Information services rendered in University of Jos Library?
3. What are the challenges experienced in the delivery of Current Awareness Services and Selective Dissemination of Information at the University of Jos Library and suggest needed strategies?

2.   REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This section dealt with the review of empirical works related to the research objectives. Although there was no current/in-depth study or research on an analysis of CAS and SDI services in University of Jos Library before this study was initiated, the researcher however, reviewed external but highly relevant literature in this phase of the research.

2.1 Importance of CAS and SDI as a factor in improving library use

Librarianship have adopted the concepts of CAS and SDI in other to bring to effectiveness the latest resources available in a library, which ordinarily cannot be known by library users because of the present growing rate of information in the society. Yaya and Uzohue (2015) presented the following as benefits of CAS and SDI;

Table 1: Benefits of CAS and SDI services

Benefits of CAS	Benefits of SDI
i. It helps to keep users better informed. ii. It provides access to needed documents. iii. It supports Academic, Professionals and Management skills. iv. It provides information in a preferred format.	i. It brings the right information closer to the user. ii. The information user will have time to concentrate on other matters instead of searching and sourcing for information resources by him. iii. The librarian provides information to the users at their convenient time. iv. It creates a good relationship between the librarian and information users. v. The users will have access to the right information at the right time and place.

2.2 Types of Current Awareness Services and Selective Dissemination of Information Services Rendered in Academic Libraries

According to Childer (1997), "The provision of information and reference services which includes CAS and SDI represents an important part of academic libraries service and may be supplied in a variety of ways within the library system." To this end, the researcher considered the list of CAS types as presented by Tanveer, (2013) which include Display, Routing of periodicals, List of latest additions, List of latest periodical received, Topical bibliographical on demand, Contents page service, News clipping service, Electronic mail and bulletin board services (BBS), Library bulletins and newsletters, Abstract bulletin, and Commercial current content service.

Due to information overload and the cumbersome variety of users in a library, academic libraries have adopted the use of information technology to ease the provision of CAS and SDI thereby using media such as Internet/Web Technologies, Social Networking, Email Alerts, Relational Databases, Smart phones applications/ SMS services, RSS feeds, etc. (Uzohue & Yaya, 2016).

2.3 Challenges experienced in the delivery of Current Awareness Services and Selective Dissemination of Information in Academic Libraries

According to Emezie and Nwaohiri (2016), CAS and SDI services provided using social networks experience challenges such as, majority of users do not visit social networking sites for academic purposes rather they perceive that such sites are mainly for fun and entertainment.

According to Johnson, Osmond & Holz (2009), each method of rendering CAS and SDI services has its challenges which includes: routed print material moves slowly, distributing photocopies is labour intensive, and browsing material requires extra time and active participation. Saved searches involve expert users and continual search amendments. Email alerts flood in-boxes already brimming with unread items.

Dauda (1995) states that, "finance is an indispensable tool for the achievement of the objective of any organization". Without adequate financial support the library cannot effectively play the role of organization and administration of collection, staff maintenance, and procurement of equipment, reference tools, provision of CAS and SDI services, satisfaction of user expectation, and evaluation of services. Every library stands on three legs: its building, collections and staff. However, the tendon that holds each of those legs and ultimately binds together into a whole is money. (Cited in Dogara, 2011).

3. METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey design was adopted for this study. The survey research is used for collection of standardized information from a sample that is considered as representative of a particular group or population. (Akuezuilo & Agu, 2003). The study was conducted in Plateau State which is in the North central geopolitical zone of Nigeria as the University of Jos has a wide range of academic programmes in this region. The population of the study consists of the 12 subject librarians and library users of the University of Jos libraries. The Main library has 44,373 registered users, medical library has 1,756 and the law library has 1,989 according to October 2017 statistics of library users as obtained from the library. Simple random sampling method was used in selecting the needed sample frame as the sampling technique gives equal chance of people to be selected for data collection.

The instrument for data collection was the questionnaire as proven relevant in Popoola (2008) and Dogara's (2011) research works amongst others. The questionnaires were designed by the researcher based on the research questions that were earlier formulated to guide the study. Two sets of questionnaire were used; one for the subject librarians and the other for the registered users of the University of Jos Library.

4.   RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A total of 114 questionnaires were distributed to University of Jos Library users (all students) and Subject Librarians (staff). 75.26% of the questionnaires were collected from the Main Library, 5.15% from Naraguta campus library, 10.31% from the law library and 9.27% were from the Medical Library.

4.1   Student-Users' Result

102 questionnaires were distributed to student library users only and 100 were returned of which 97 were valid.

4.1.1   Demography

Participants in terms of age, ranged from 16-50 years old with the following intervals 16-20, 21-24, 25-30, 31-40, 41-50 at a frequency of 17, 27, 34, 9 and 10 students respectively. 25-30 years made the highest age-class of participants with a percentage of 35.05%. In terms of gender, 62 are male and 35 female while 68 were undergraduates and 29 postgraduates.

4.1.2 Importance of Current Awareness Services and Selective Dissemination of Information services in Library Use

Results showed that 55.67% of participants have received one or more form of CAS and SDI services from University of Jos Library while below average: 43.33% have not received any of CAS and SDI services in the library. However 47.42% of participants acknowledge that forms of CAS and SDI services are averagely rendered, 41.24% assessed that the services are poorly rendered while only 11.34% rated the CAS and SDI services of the University of Jos Library as Good.

The result also showed that UJL users that are aware of CAS and SDI services have not fully received available services in the library. Text messages, routing of periodicals, list of latest periodical received, social network, contents page service, news clipping service, Electronic mail (email) and Bulletin Board Services scored below the average range of users that have experienced any of these CAS and SDI services in the University of Jos Library. Painfully, 45.36% of the respondents have not patronized any of the received Current Awareness Services and Selective Dissemination of Information services from University of Jos Library while only 2.06% patronized all.

Table 2: Challenges experience by the University of Jos Library in the dissemination of CAS and SDI Services

S/N	CHALLENGES OF CAS AND SDI SERVICES	SA	A	D	SD	TOTAL
A	Inadequate GST lecture time	26	44	22	5	97
		26.80%	45.36%	22.68%	5.15%	100%
B	Lack of adequate user education	32	49	15	1	97
		32.99%	50.52%	15.46%	1.03%	100%
C	Inadequate GST lecture hall	45	36	13	3	97
		46.39%	37.11%	13.40%	3.09%	100%
D	Poor library orientation	35	44	16	2	97
		36.08%	45.36%	16.49%	2.06%	100%
E	Lack of interest by users in the services	20	34	34	9	97
		20.62%	35.05%	35.05%	9.27%	100%
F	Hostility of library staffs	22	20	43	12	97
		22.68%	20.62%	44.33%	12.37%	100%

SA (strongly agree), A (agree), D (disagree), SD (strongly disagree).

The above result confirms several challenges experienced in the University of Jos Library in terms of Current Awareness Services and Selective Dissemination of Information services. The participants' scores are all above average except for the hostility of staff for which 44% of the respondents disagreed.

4.2   Library Staff Result

10 questionnaires were returned from the 12, distributed to subject Librarians. 8 were from the Main Library, 1 from the Law Library, 1 from the Medical Library and none from Naraguta Campus.

4.2.1   Demography

Three (3) respondents were in the age class of 31-40 years, 4 in the class of 41-50 years and 3 in the class of 51 and above. However, Gender participation was equal, having 5 males and 5 female staff as respondents. Educationally, 5 (or 50%) of the respondents possessed Diploma Certification, 30% with Masters in Library Science (MLS), 1 (or 10%) with Bachelor in Library and Information Science, and 1 (or 10%) with a Doctorate Degree (PHD). All respondents are aware of at least a Current Awareness Services and Selective Dissemination of Information services rendered in University of Jos library.

The respondents confirmed that Pasting of list of new arrivals, library display of books, library display of journals and pictures, sensitization or library orientation and list of latest periodicals received, constitutes the SDI and CAS often rendered in the University of Jos Library. However, 30% of the respondents rated SDI and CAS of the University of Jos Library at average, 70% rated the internet service as good, while No respondent rated the services as excellent or poor.

Table 3: Challenges experience by the University of Jos Library in the dissemination of CAS and SDI Services

S/N	CHALLENGES OF CAS AND SDI SERVICES	SA	A	D	SD	TOTAL
A	Inadequate ICT facilities	6	3	1	0	10
		60.00%	30.00%	10.00%	0.00%	100%
B	Lack of adequate training to subject librarians	1	6	2	1	10
		10.0%	60.00%	20.00%	1.00%	100%
C	Lack of adequate infrastructure	3	5	1	1	10
		30.00%	50.00%	10.00%	10.00%	100%
D	Poor library orientation	2	6	2	0	10
		20.00%	60.00%	20.00%	0.00%	100%
E	Insufficient funding	5	4	1	0	10
		50.00%	40.00%	10.00%	0.00%	100%
F	Lack of interest by users in the services	2	4	3	1	10
		20.00%	40.00%	30.00%	10.00%	100%

SA (strongly agree), A (agree), D (disagree), SD (strongly disagree).
Table 2 shows that all staff response agreed on the items listed as challenges to rendering CAS and SDI services UJL.

4.3   Summary of Findings

The major findings as supported by the results of the survey can be summarized as follows;

1. CAS and SDI bring to effectiveness the latest resources available in a library.
2. A CAS and SDI service enables library users to have prompt access to the right information.
3. CAS and SDI services create a good relationship between the librarian and information users.
4.   Pasting of list of new arrivals, library display of books, library display of journals and pictures, sensitization or library orientation, latest pasting received and General Studies (GST) are the major CAS and SDI in the University of Jos Library.
5. Major challenges to CAS and SDI services in University of Jos Library are inadequate GST lecture time and hall, lack of adequate user education, inadequate ICT facilities, inadequate funding, poor infrastructures, and lack of interest by library users.
6. Distributing library resources to interested information users is labour intensive.

5.   CONCLUSION

This study considered the Analysis of Current Awareness Services and Selective Dissemination of Information Services in the University of Jos Library. The result of the study shows that pasting of list of new arrivals, library display of books, library display of journals and pictures, sensitization or library orientation, latest pasting received and General Studies (GST) are the major Current Awareness Services and Selective Dissemination of Information services rendered in the University of Jos Library. Text messages, routing of periodicals, list of latest periodical received, social network, contents page service, news clipping service, Electronic mail (email) and Bulletin Board Services are barely rendered.

Current Awareness Services and Selective Dissemination of Information brings about the effectiveness the latest resources available in a library, library users to have access to the right information at the right time and place, create a good relationship between the librarian and information users, supports academic, professional and management skills and keeps users informed. Inadequate GST lecture time and hall, lack of adequate user education, inadequate ICT facilities, inadequate funding, poor infrastructures, and lack of interest by library users are

the challenges face by the University of Jos library. It also discovered that provision of adequate GST lecture time, provision of adequate GST lecture hall, provision of effective library orientation to library users and staff, motivation to library users, application of ICT, funding, adequate infrastructure and employment of trained staff are strategies for improved services.

From the foregoing, nine (9) recommendations were made to effectively redress the trend some of these were that Subject librarians/staff should be encouraged to pursue higher levels of education and attain higher professional skills, Library management should have improved funding of the library with the school management as well as explore other avenues for the generation of funds, effort should be made by library management toward the application of ICT in Current Awareness Services and Selective Dissemination of Information Services. Finally, the work has Analise the Current Awareness Services and the Selective Dissemination of Information Services in the University of Jos Library and spells out limitations for the study and how they were overcome, and then draw suggestion for future research.

5.2   Suggestion for Further Research

This research work is not conclusive in itself as far as Current Awareness Services and Selective Dissemination of Information in academic libraries is concerned. The following suggestions are made for further research:

1. The influence of Current Awareness Services and Selective Dissemination of Information services in academic libraries on academic performances of users.
2.   The study of Current Awareness Services and Selective Dissemination of Information services use by the visually impaired.

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